

**MEETING OF THE HOUSTON/GALVESTON NAVIGATION**  
**SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**September 9, 1999**

The fifty-fourth meeting of the Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, September 9, 1999, in the Conference Room at the Houston Pilots' Office, Houston, Texas. A list of attendees is attached as enclosure (1). A recording of the meeting is available upon request. This recording must be requested by September 9, 2000.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Tim Leitzell, with quorum, at 9:00 AM.

**OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Captain Wayne Gusman welcomed members and guests and made some general remarks, noting that navigation safety along the Houston Ship Channel did not seem to have been affected by the projected computer problems associated with September 9, 1999.

**OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

Chairman Leitzell greeted committee members and attendees. Self-introductions of the Committee members followed.

**APPROVAL OF MAY 27, 1999 MINUTES**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the previous meeting's minutes. Motion carried.

**NAVIGATION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Larry Miller, Subcommittee Chairman, presented the minutes from the August 26, 1999 Subcommittee meeting [enclosure (2)]. Members of the subcommittee presented the following issues to the full committee.

**BAYTOWN TUNNEL REMOVAL**

Mr. Eric Sommer presented an update on the status of the removal project. The final section of the tunnel in the vicinity of the ship channel is to be removed during the week of September 13. Removal will require a 12-hour closure of the channel. Even after the final section is removed, demolition operations will continue (outside the channel) on the "green side" of the channel through the end of the year.

**CHANNEL DREDGING**

Mr. James Jackson updated the Committee on Port of Houston's dredging projects as well as private contract dredging activity. Mr. Jackson noted that the Port of Houston Authority was taking the lead in obtaining congressional approval to include barge lanes in the ship channel's deepening and widening project. PHA, for example, had sent a letter to local congressional leaders indicating that the barge lanes enhanced navigational safety. The correspondence indicated that barge lanes (maintained to a depth of twelve feet) would be required from Bolivar Roads to Morgan's Point. Mr. Jackson then moved that the Committee

draft a letter to the Eighth Coast Guard District Commander urging him to send letters in support of barge lanes as an integral part of the Houston Ship Channel to both the Corps of Engineers and Congress. [See enclosure (3)]. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **EXXON'S SPILLMAN ISLAND PROJECT**

Mr. Miller presented a brief update of the status of Exxon's Alexander Island bioremediation project. The cleanup effort should be complete by February 2000.

#### **PORTS**

Ms. Tricia Clark reported on several PORTS-related issues. A proposal to install a PORTS meter at Exxon Baytown may be unfeasible because it presents a direct feed problem for the meter. She has scheduled a conference call with NOAA to address this issue. Ms. Clark also reported that there was some indication that tide gauge readings may be inaccurate. She had discussed this issue with the contractor responsible for maintaining the gauges, as well as the Blucher Institute, and would be following up to see if the problem was associated with datum or screen display issues.

#### **ELECTRONIC NAVIGATION**

Captain Mike Morris, from the Houston Pilots, reported that the pilots are looking at a variety of different electronic navigation systems and that he is close to making a recommendation to the pilots for an initial acquisition of systems to be tested. Collin Weeks reported on the NASA initiative, indicating that the system was close to an operational test from various remote sites. Mr. Larry Miller expressed the view that any electronic navigation charting initiative must address the needs of all users. He noted that he had convened an ad hoc committee with representation from users, the Houston Pilots, etc. with a view toward moving the Port of Houston forward. He expressed his appreciation in this regard to Tom Phelps, Presiding Officer of the Houston Pilots, Colin Weeks, and Mike Morris for their efforts. Captain Desmond, Chief, Marine Safety Division, Eighth Coast Guard District, suggested that it might be helpful to display one of the transponders being used in New Orleans at the next HOGANSAC meeting. He also suggested that the Committee might want to have Captain Ross address the committee concerning the status of approval of international ENC/AIS standards. In accordance with its request at the May 27, 1999 meeting, the Committee was provided with a copy of the Eighth Coast Guard District's letter forwarding the Committee's concerns regarding the lack of laws or legal principles related to the use of electronic charting and navigation equipment. [Enclosure (4)].

#### **WATERWAYS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

Ms. Ellyn Roof, Subcommittee Chairman, presented the minutes from the August 26, 1999 Subcommittee meeting. [Enclosure (5)]. Note that the minutes are incorrectly dated for September 7, 1999].

#### **AIDS TO NAVIGATION**

The Houston Pilots representative noted that dredging had been completed in the lower half of Galveston Bay. The Committee was interested in when the navigation ranges in that area would be rebuilt. Captain Cusson, Chief, Office of Aids to Navigation, Eighth Coast Guard District, indicated that this project

was a number one priority with Civil Engineering Unit Miami. However, he was unsure of the status of the project. He reported that the Eighth District had signed a letter requesting immediate funding of this important project. Coast Guard Headquarters had agreed to fund \$1.2 million in fiscal year 2000 for the project. The next step was to solicit construction firms and to award the construction contract in March 2000. Captain Cusson also noted that the Eighth District had a picture of the replacement structures that will be built as range markers in the lower bay. Captain Cusson explained the configuration of the new structure in response to a question from a member of the Committee. Chief Horan, Group Galveston Aids to Navigation Officer, who presented knockdown cost data [enclosure (6)]. The information includes costs for FY98, FY99 and for ranges, lights and day beacons. He also presented information on the status of current aids to navigation discrepancies along the Houston Ship Channel. [Enclosure (7)]. It was suggested that the Coast Guard install daylight ranges on the entrance channel. Chief Horan indicated that they would look at the issue but that there was a concern about the visibility of the lights, given the ranges at which they must be seen to be effective. It was recommended that the hurricane contingency review plan be reviewed at the January meeting and that the Group be invited to make a presentation on this subject.

#### **PIPELINE SAFETY**

Ms. Tricia Clark reported that the Mineral Management Service has a good handle on the location of offshore pipelines. Inshore pipeline location information is the responsibility of the Texas Railroad Commission. There is a repository of such information but it is contained in county-by-county recordations. Mr. Larry Miller reported that the Houston Port Authority has hired a consultant to develop pipeline maps for the upper channel area. Ted Thorjussan forwarded a copy of a study on anchor pipeline penetration. A copy of that study is appended to the subcommittee's minutes. It was suggested that we revisit this issue after the conclusion of the deepening and widening project. Ms. Clark indicated that she would write a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the depth to which such pipelines should be buried to clarify the requirement in light of the committee's concerns regarding the possible navigational hazards of the present pipeline configuration. Ms. Clark also raised the issue of tankers bringing in anchors of 25 tons and upward and the impact such heavy anchors might have on pipeline if the anchor were to be dropped on it. The committee expressed concern that the current depth-burying guidance provided by the Corps might not be sufficient.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no representative from the National Weather Service. Therefore, that item was carried over to the next meeting. Chairman Leitzell recommended that Houston Ship Channel "barge lanes" be placed under Old Business henceforth. The tug and barge members on the Committee will take the lead and the TWA representatives in the audience were requested to actively interface and communicate with the Committee. He indicated this was a safety issue the Committee worked hard to obtain and it is imperative that the issue be kept alive.

The Committee was updated on the status of the oil rig movement. The rig will be brought in on September 30<sup>th</sup>. There will be a moving safety zone imposed around the rig as it transits up the ship channel. The rig will be moored at the Brown & Root facility. Load-out is scheduled for October 30<sup>th</sup>, at which time there will be a full channel closure for approximately 18 hours. The schedule then calls for the rig to be transported to sea approximately two weeks

later. A handout from Brown & Root on this operation is included as an enclosure to these minutes. [Enclosure 8]

The Committee was updated on the HL&P tower crossing removal project. The plan is to remove the southeast tower when the tunnel is being removed. The tower in the vicinity of Old River would be moved to Kirby Island, sometime early next year. Dolphins around the west structure, in the vicinity of Morgan's Point, are also scheduled to be removed. There will be a meeting with the Corps, the Coast Guard and HL&P on remediation issues soon.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

The Houston Pilots' representative requested a survey of depths alongside all port terminals along the ship channel. Captain Morris noted that some of the facilities are above advertised range. He noted that New York had had a similar problem and that the Captain of the Port had required all terminal operators to survey depths alongside their facilities and report the results once each year. Captain Morris noted in particular that the Hess facility is a problem and that the Houston Pilots have decided to not bring in vessels with excessive drafts after a couple of times in which a vessel is brought in with excessive draft for the destination facility. MSO Houston will look into the matter. Tim Leitzell, Mike Morris and others offered to get together to discuss the matter and present possible solutions at the next meeting.

Tim Leitzell indicated that he wants to publicize the efforts of HOGANSAC. He is looking for ways to disseminate information and incorporate additional HOGANSAC-related information. One initiative would be to publicize meeting minutes in the Port of Houston magazine.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the full Committee will be held at the Houston Pilots' Office at 9:00 AM on January 27, 2000. The Committee members and attendees were polled and voiced no concerns regarding the location of the next meeting. The subcommittees will meet January 13, 2000 at the Port of Houston Authority, 111 East Loop North, Houston, Texas, with the Navigation Subcommittee meeting at 9:00 AM, followed by the Waterways Subcommittee. Tentative plans are to hold the May 2000 meetings in Galveston at a location to be determined.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 AM.

WAYNE D. GUSMAN  
Executive Director

Certified: TIM LEITZELL  
Committee Chairman

Encl: (1) Attendance for the HOGANSAC meeting of September 9, 1999  
(2) Minutes of 8/26/99 Navigation Subcommittee Meeting

- (3) Port of Houston Authority (Legislative Affairs Manager) handout on Houston Ship Channel Improvement Project, Barge Lanes
- (4) Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District letter of September 3, 1999 concerning "Regulations Pertaining to Electronic Navigation Equipment"
- (5) Minutes of 8/26/99 Waterways Subcommittee Meeting (with attachments)
- (6) AtoN Knockdown Cost Data
- (7) Current Aid Discrepancy List for Houston Ship Channel
- (8) Brown and Root Energy Services, Updated Load-Out Schedule for Diana/Hoover project

The following Committee members were present at the meeting:

Executive Director  
CAPT Wayne D. Gusman, USCG

Executive Secretary  
CDR Paula Carroll, USCG

Committee Chairman  
Mr. Tim Leitzell

Mr. Daniel Buchsbaum	Captain Jack H. Smith
Mr. James Jackson, Jr.	Ms. Kelly Teichman
Captain Harry Lydick, Jr.	Mr. Mang Vo
Mr. Larry Miller	Ms. Wyndylyn von Zharen
Mrs. Ellyn H. Roof	Ms. Dena Wilson
COL Nicholas Buechler, USACOE (Ex Officio)	

The following Committee members were not present:

Mr. Marlon Brown	Captain John Hawkins
Mr. Stan Cook	Mr. Charles Stewart
Captain Stephen F. Ford	

Others in attendance were:

CAPT John Simpson USCG Group Galveston	Mr. Ted Walters Port of Houston Authority
LT Greg DeLong USCG MSU Galveston	CDR Todd Gentile USCG D8(oan)
Mr. Mike Morris Houston Pilots	Mr. Thomas Phelps Houston Pilots
LTJG Sue York USCG VTS Houston/Galveston	LCDR Frank Kingett USCG, CGC Papaw
Mr. Ted Thorjussen West Gulf Maritime	Mr. Dalton Krueger Army Corps of Engineers
LTJG Matt York USCG MSO Houston-Galveston	Mr. Herbie Maurer Army Corps of Engineers
Mr. Gene Hafele National Weather Service	Mr. R. Roof Citizen
Mr. Jonathan Whitworth SeaRiver Maritime Inc	Ms. Tricia Clark Skaugen PetroTrans
CDR Peter Simons USCG VTS Houston/Galveston PCO	Mr. Al DuPont NASA/JSC

Mr. Ken Wells  
AWO

Mr. Les Sutton  
Hollywood Marine/TWOA

BMCS Gary Bean  
USCG, CGC Clamp

Mr. Brian Kyle  
National Weather Service

Mr. Greg Pollock  
Texas General Land Office

Mr. John Windus  
Barnett & Casbarian, Inc.

Mr. Pat Kilbride  
Exxon Upstream Development

Mr. Garry Blowers  
Saipem

Ms. Jamie Guerrero  
TAMUG student

Mr. Darryl Hanus  
TAMUG student

Mr. Zach Taylor  
TAMUG student

Ms. Maria H. Staalnacke  
TAMUG student

Mr. Robert Fry, Jr.  
Megafleet

Mr. Todd Wheeler  
Brampco Shipping

Mr. John Salvesen  
Odfjell Tankers

Mr. Lamar Doyle  
Intracoastal Towing/TWOA

Ms. Susan Gomez  
NASA/JSC

Mr. Monty Ledet  
USCG D8(mov-1)

CDR Mike Bechtel  
USCG MSO Houston-Galveston

BMC Tom Horan  
USCG, Gru Galv AtoN

Mr. Ed Lynch  
Exxon Upstream Development

Mr. Todd Redmond  
Exxon Upstream Development

Mr. Scott Nichols  
TAMUG student

Ms. Marcy Hancock  
TAMUG student

Ms. Monica Schmiz  
TAMUG student

Ms. Regina Woodrom Luna  
TAMUG student

CDR Bob Acker  
USCG, MSO Houston-Galveston

Mr. Luigi Lattanzio  
Saipem

Mr. Leslie B. Brewer  
Coastal Towing, Inc.